

REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING PROGRAM

Inventory of the Highest Local Resource Priorities

STRAFFORD REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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INTRODUCTION

The Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) is pleased to submit this portfolio of the highest local resource protection priorities for the planning region as part of the Regional Environmental Planning Program (REPP). The REPP began in 1998 with SRPC staff meeting with and encouraging local officials and volunteers to identify and list the various historical, cultural and natural resources in each community. Through this process, communities could then prioritize their resource protection needs in anticipation of funding becoming available under the Land Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP). This portfolio, contained herein, is a compilation of the highest resource protection priorities that were submitted by participating communities and represent a subset of the more than 250 resource protection needs that were listed in the 1998 REPP Final Report. The resource descriptions were based upon information provided by local conservation commission members and other local volunteers.

This report describes eleven (11) resource protection proposals from eight (8) different communities that recently participated in the REPP process. In this first year of LCHIP funding, several Towns in the planning region did not submit a resource priority primarily because they needed more time to reach a consensus on their resource priorities. In guiding communities in their priority selection, SRPC recommended that the highest priority should represent a unprotected resource that has the greatest local support, is under some reasonable imminent threat and has high natural, cultural or historical significance. To this end, the highest priorities selected involve a variety of resources including the restoration of historic buildings, preservation of valuable habitat and water supply watershed areas and the acquisition of land areas for new community recreation facilities. Nearly half of the targeted resources involve restoring important historic buildings while the other half involves protection of critical land areas. Dover and Newmarket, submitted two local priorities; one that addresses land protection needs and one that addresses an equally important need for additional recreational facilities and/or a means for alternative transportation in the rapidly growing Seacoast Area.

Cost-effectiveness was also a major consideration in the resource priority selection. Communities focused on getting the biggest “bang for the buck”, recognizing the competitive application process of this funding program and that the town would have to provide monetary matching for the project. All of the selected resource priorities are under some imminent threat related to either development or deterioration in the case of historic buildings. Development pressures are particularly high in communities in the southern half of the SRPC region (Seacoast Region), due to the rapid population growth in this area. The selected resource priorities in these communities tend to involve smaller “island” tracts of lands, but are critically important in preserving the rural character and important habitat areas in these towns. The development pressures are rapidly progressing northward into communities in the northern half of SRPC region, where land preservation proposals in this region tend to involve larger tracts of land but are relatively more cost-effective since land values have not skyrocketed yet.

The local priorities are listed in alphabetical order and not by order of priority. It is understood that the LCHIP funding selection process will occur annually, it is hoped that the resource priority information contained in this documented would be carried forward, as appropriate, in future funding selection processes as well.

LOCAL RESOURCE PRIORITY
CITY OF DOVER

LOWER BELLAMY RIVER CONSERVATION LAND

Dover's Local Resource Priority

Resource Description

The lower Bellamy River wildlife corridor consists of over 800 acres of forests, open grassland, and tidal wetlands along the western shore of lower estuarine portion of the Bellamy River (See Attached Map). Through previous preservation efforts, over 600 acres of this area has already been protected, primarily through public land purchases. However, several key parcels remain unprotected and increasing development pressures threaten to fragment what is largely a contiguous wildlife habitat corridor.

Much of the already protected land is currently maintained by the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department as a wildlife management area. The NH Audobon Society also owns two parcels in this area. The City of Dover considers it a high priority to acquire the remaining parcels in the area to preserve the entire shoreline area. Public access is available for recreation purpose off of Old Garrison Road.

Significance of the Properties

The currently unprotected and privately-owned properties lie both within the main body of the wildlife habitat area and along the margins of the public lands. Acquisition of several key parcels would provide additional access points to the wildlife management area and assure that the entire habitat corridor would remain unfragmented. Establishing formal protective agreements (conservation easements) on shorefront parcels associated with several landowners and existing condominium developments would protect a regional greenway through south Dover.

Imminence Of Threat

Residential developments and a mobile home park have been proposed on several key parcels adjacent to the Bellamy Wildlife Management Area. So far, the City of Dover and the State of New Hampshire has been able to reject such incompatible land use proposals. Development pressure remains high for waterfront parcels in this very desirable area. A new condominium development is currently under construction on a parcel along the eastern shoreline of the River in this same area.

Leverage

In November 1999, the City of Dover dedicated 100% of the land use change tax to the Conservation Fund, to be administered by the Conservation Commission, for open space protection efforts.

Local Support

The City of Dover recently adopted a Master Plan, which includes a chapter dedicated to open space protection and development of recreational facilities. This 2000 Master Plan outlines an aggressive program to implement land protection efforts. The Dover Conservation Commission and City Council is in the process of forming an Open Lands Committee, in accordance with the Master Plan, to manage the recently established Conservation Fund and promote open space preservation within Dover.

Partnerships

Several of the landowners in the targeted areas have already approached the Conservation Commission seeking assistance in establishing conservation easements on parcels contiguous with currently protected lands. The Conservation Commission has also been communicating with the Great Bay Partnership and the Nature Conservancy who have expressed interest in eventually undertaking land protection projects within the upper reaches of the Great Bay Estuary, including the subject Bellamy River wildlife corridor. However, their current focus appears to be in obtaining conservation easements on properties along the direct shoreline of the Great Bay and it may take several years before these organizations change their focus to properties along rivers that feed into the Great Bay. The Dover Conservation Commission feels that it is critical to act on these properties now and not wait much for the possibility of future protection efforts by others, given the development pressures in this area.

Public Access

Much of this area is currently accessible through a public parking area off Old Garrison Road. There are portions of this area (the Audubon Society parcels) to which access is limited by adjoining privately-held lands. Additional public access points are planned with the addition of key parcels.

Stewardship

The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department currently manages the largest consolidated parcel in this area. The Audubon Society also holds two large parcels within the wildlife habitat area. One task of the City's Open Lands Committee, as outlined in Dover's 2000 Master Plan, is to develop management plans for open public lands. The City's stewardship responsibilities for this area would outlined in a management plan which would attempt to coordinate the activities of the various groups overseeing parcels located in this area.

Method Of Preservation

The method of preservation for the individual properties within the target area would likely involve acquisition of conservation easements on the selected parcels, however, an actual fee simple purchase may be possible and would be evaluated based on the potential cost and the availability of funding. A voluntary donation of development rights has been proposed for one parcel within the target area.

Lower Bellamy conservation Easement map

COCHECO RIVER BICYCLE/RECREATION TRAIL

Dover's Local Resource Priority

Resource Description

This resource consists of protecting a 3.5 mile section of former railroad "right of way" that extends between downtown Dover and the Strafford County complex from future development and fragmentation. The goal of this project is to create a multi-purpose (non-motorized) trail along this right-of-way for recreation, nature observation and commuting purposes. This corridor would also serve as an alternative transportation route for Dover residents who work at one of the City's largest employers, Liberty Mutual Insurance Company, and also provide bicycle access to the planned athletic facilities adjacent to the Strafford County Courthouse (See Attached Map). This corridor parallels Sixth Street, which is the locus of aggressive commercial and residential development in Dover. This proposed alternate transportation corridor might reduce the growing traffic load on Sixth Street and, at the same time, protect a natural greenway along the northern shores of the Cocheco River.

Significance of the Properties

Currently, there are several privately-owned parcels that contain portions of this former railroad bed, which represent a threat to the continuity and access to this trail corridor. Acquisition of access rights to this corridor would provide the public with recreational opportunities by preserving some of the most scenic vistas in north Dover. The trail corridor would link the downtown area and many residential neighborhoods to the new Liberty Mutual office complex and the anticipated development of athletic fields adjacent to the County Courthouse, providing a valuable alternative bicycle route that could reduce traffic congestion and air pollution in the downtown areas.

Imminence of Threat

Residential developments have already broken the continuity of the corridor at several places that will require trail detours to navigate around these areas. The threats to the overall continuity and thereby the viability of the proposed multi-purpose trail are significant. It is imperative that additional fragmentation of the corridor be avoided.

Leverage

In November 1999, the City of Dover dedicated 100% of the land use change tax to the Conservation Fund, to be administered by the Conservation Commission, for open space protection efforts.

Local Support

The recently adopted a Master Plan identifies open space protection and development of additional recreational facilities as significant near-term priorities. This 2000 Master Plan outlines an aggressive program to implement land protection efforts including the establishment of an Open Lands Committee. In addition, the Master Plan recommends creating alternative transportation routes for commuters employed in the rapidly growing commercial-business district as well as provide bicycle access to other popular in-town destinations to reduce downtown vehicle congestion. This proposed project addresses

both goals by promoting additional open space along an important river corridor and creating a 3.5 mile alternative transportation corridor linked to one of the City's largest employers and a newly planned recreational facility.

Partnerships

Liberty Mutual Insurance Company currently owns a large portion of the former railroad bed. As part of their site development plan approval, Liberty Mutual agreed to consider allowing public access to their portion of the former railroad bed. The City has identified the Sixth Street corridor as a transportation enhancement priority. The City has (so far unsuccessfully) pursued federal funding for promotion of alternative transportation modes in this area, including utilization of the former railroad bed. Other potential sources of funding include several bicycle trail promotion organizations.

Public Access

The Cocheco River corridor is linked to an additional abandoned railroad right-of-way that bisects the downtown area in south Dover. The City of Dover received a federal CMAQ grant to assist in the construction of a bicycle route through the city area including the use of a former railroad bridge across the Cocheco River. This bridge links the south Dover right of way with the subject northward extension of the right of way. Public access to the proposed trail system would be available throughout the downtown area. In order to complete the trail system, a bridge or other route across the Spaulding Turnpike would need to be provided.

Stewardship

The management of a potential high-intensive use transportation corridor would require significant resources from the City of Dover. Justification for pursuing such an endeavor requires broad-based public support. The success of similar projects in Keene, New Hampshire; Stow, Vermont; and Brunswick, Maine indicates that such a project is worth pursuing. The first step is preventing the further fragmentation of the right of way.

Method of Preservation

The method of preservation for the transportation corridor is likely to be through the purchase of rights-of-way easements through the privately-owned parcels along this corridor. The City already has a general agreement with the Liberty Mutual Insurance Company for public access for the portion of the trail corridor that extends through their property. This agreement would need only to be formalized once the trail is completed.

Cocheco River Alternative Transportation corridor

Local Resource Priority

Town of Farmington

Historic Firehouse Preservation/Restoration Town of Farmington's Local Resource Priority

Resource Description

Funding assistance is being requested to help restore and preserve the historic firehouse located on Mechanic Street in the Town of Farmington. This building was built in 1920 and was used as the Town's main firehouse for more than 50 years. It is no longer actively used by the Fire Department but remains as a historic landmark and is in need of some restoration work. The community vision is to create a firehouse museum in this old firehouse. Ultimately, the successful completion of this project could stimulate the revitalization of this historic section of the village district, which is one block off of Main Street. There are several old buildings that are in various stages of disrepair and need to be restored. The proposed restoration of the firehouse is considered to be a potential "seed" project for the possible restoration of the entire block.

Significance of Resource

This historic firehouse was built in 1920 and was used by the fire department until 1977 when a new one was built with donations and 100% volunteer labor. The town has a rich heritage of civic organizations such as the fire departments, and fire fighting has played an important part in the town's history.

A consortium of local community groups is attempting to purchase the property, and convert it to a fire fighting museum and community heritage center. The town owns two 1930's fire engines, which are stored and preserved for future display. There are also a number of very valuable, museum quality firefighting artifacts in town, including valuable Currier and Ives prints of fire fighting scenes. These would all be displayed in the firehouse museum.

Imminence of Threat

This structure is still nearly in its original state except for some minor interior changes after several changes in ownership since it has passed out of public hands. The façade has been altered slightly but not irreversibly and the hose tower (once four stories tall) is temporarily shortened. Another change of ownership may cause the historic nature of the building to be lost forever. The current owner has received several purchase offers, but has said he will hold off for a while to see if enough funds can be raised by the community to purchase the building.

Leverage

Several potential sources of matching funds are available in town. The Historical Society has funds in the amount of about \$70,000 for historic activities. The town has several trust funds totaling in the hundreds of thousands dollars that are designated for "community benefit". The town has a history of charitable giving, with one local family responsible for a large portion of the multi-million dollar high school.

Local Support

Nearly every local resident that has heard the details of this proposed plan has expresses support for the project. Every man and woman attending a recent meeting of

the volunteer fire department signed a petition of support. The town government has recently made clear their desire to engage in a downtown revitalization effort to which this project contributes. The Historical Society has expressed appreciation and support for the activity. The Division of Historical Resources, NH Preservation Alliance, and the nationally known group, the Conservation Fund, have all expressed endorsement and support for the project.

Partnerships

A partnership with the regional economic development corporation (WEDCO) is in the early stages and is progressing. They are the non-profit fiscal agent for the Community Preservation Guild a NH non-profit corporation that is spearheading the acquisition and restoration effort. Youths from the Strafford County Juvenile Court Diversion program may have an opportunity to learn new job skills and work with adult mentors from the community. The Family Resource Center of Greater Farmington are also willing partners that are seeking funding to allow them a greater role in the facility.

Public Access

This resource is intended to be a Firefighting Museum and Community Heritage center. Public access is critical to its ongoing success.

Stewardship

The building will be owned and managed by the Community Preservation Guild, but community partners are being encouraged to come forward with use proposals consistent with the Guild mission.

Method of Preservation

The proposed method of preservation includes some minor building restoration and outright purchase of the property, which will then donated to the community or appropriate civic group. Restoration work will be required for the building façade and the hose tower as well as the building interior.

Other Significant Resource Priorities in Farmington:

- Mad River Protection Corridor
- Cocheco River Protection Corridor
- Historic Buildings and Structures
 - Brush Factory Main Street
 - Doughboy's Restaurant
 - Milton Road Dry Stone culvert
- Historic Farm Protection/Conservation Easements
 - Barden Tree Farm
 - Leary Farm
 - Vickery Orchards
- Unique Habitat and Natural Resource Areas
 - Peat Bog and Oxbow Pond
 - Ten Road School Marsh
 - Yonder Ridge Ponds

Local Resource Priority
Town of Lee

KIMBALL WOODS CONSERVATION LAND

Town of Lee's Local Resource Priority

Resource Description

This selected resource consists of protecting a 75 acre forest and tree farm owned by Robert and Amogene Kimball, located in the Town of Lee between Turtle Pond Road (Route 155) and Garrity Road on the east side of town near Route 4 (See Attached Figure). The current landowners, who have owned this land for many years, are reaching an age where it is difficult to maintain the property and afford the taxes. With a large part of their financial assets tied up in their land, the owners would like to sell the property, but prefer not to have it developed. As a result, many Town residents have been working very hard to secure the necessary funds to acquire this property, but fear that time may be running out. As an added incentive and/or to satisfy possible matching needs, an adjacent landowner has expressed a contingent offer to donate his adjacent parcel of 70 acres to create a much larger conservation area.

Significance of Resource

In the 19th century, this wooded site served as the "lower pasture" of the Alphonso Jones farm. It is part of the Oyster River watershed and is located over a major stratified-drift aquifer. Two wetland stream corridors traverse the property, one of which originates at Turtle Pond, a spring-fed water body and notable wildlife habitat that is located on an adjacent property and protected by a conservation easement held by the town of Lee.

The Kimball woods tract is located in hilly terrain with many interesting geological features, notably an esker and a large kettle hole. The site provides valuable habitat for a variety of wildlife, including deer, fox, coyote, flying squirrels, turkey, ravens, barred owls, and whip-poor-wills, and serves as a major route for wildlife migration along the Lee-Durham town lines, connecting the Steppingstones-Sheep Road interior of Lee with the Oyster River basin to the east. According to Professor Tom Lee, UNH botanist, the upland portion of this property is dominated by Dry Appalachian Oak-Hickory Forest and Appalachian Oak-Heath Forest. The latter community type, while not rare in New Hampshire, is considered worthy of protection. The lowlands support a Red Maple-Sensitive Fern community type. Prof. Lee has identified at least 65 species of vascular plant life on the property, ranging from pink lady-slippers and round-leaved hepatica to royal fern and marsh marigold.

Imminence of Threat

A local developer wants to buy this property for a residential subdivision – most likely a 30-unit cluster development. This would not only result in a significant loss of valuable wildlife habitat and other natural features but would cause other significant secondary effects such as higher education costs for the town. The proposed development would also substantially raise the risk of contamination for the important underlying aquifer. The owners are willing to wait - but not too long - to allow the town or other conservation groups to raise money for acquisition of the property.

Leverage

The Town of Lee has several conservation funds and a strong record of protecting open space. A local, adjacent landowner (Joe Ford) has expressed an interest in donating 70 acres of mixed fields, woods, streams (including a portion of the Oyster River), and wetlands as a conservation match for the Kimball property. Together, the Kimball-Ford properties would comprise 145 acres of protected land, which in turn would abut another 80 acres of open space along Garrity Road in Lee, as well as the UNH cornfields and the Tecce Farm fields off Mast Road in Durham. This entire swath of landscape in the Oyster River watershed is a critical mass of open space that badly needs protection in a part of New Hampshire that is undergoing rapid population growth.

Local Support

Adjacent landowners and neighbors ("Friends of Kimball's Woods") have been meeting regularly since mid-March and are planning to organize a fund-raising effort. As mentioned above, the Town of Lee has worked hard over the years to protect open space. At the recent March town meeting, for example, the residents approved, without a single dissenting voice, the expenditure of \$527,000 for the acquisition of permanent conservation easements on three parcels of land totaling 240 acres. More than 58 percent of this money came directly from town funds - a sum equivalent to 19 percent of the town's operating budget.

Partnerships

Representatives from the Society for Protection of NH Forests (SPNHF) and the Nature Conservancy have visited the property and believe it should be protected. It is expected that at least one of these conservation groups would be willing to participate in efforts to secure funding for acquisition, and perhaps to serve as co-owner. As mentioned above, the adjacent landowner would also be willing to donate his land of 70 acres to make a larger conservation area if the Kimball Woods parcel can be protected.

Public Access

Under a "tread lightly" philosophy, limited access would be allowed in the form of nature trails for bird watchers and student groups, as well as the possibility of infrequent access to permit selective forest management or the installation of a town well.

Stewardship

Management of the property would probably be done by the Town of Lee or by a conservation group (perhaps a joint committee).

Method of Protection

Based on the owners' preference, the proposed method of protection consists of an outright land purchase, combined with an easement to ensure permanent protection.

Lee's map figure

LOCAL RESOURCE PRIORITY
TOWN OF MIDDLETON

FOUR CORNERS MEETING HOUSE MIDDLETON'S HIGHEST LOCAL RESOURCE PRIORITY

Resource Description

The Four Corners Meeting House is a long standing meeting place that has played a significant role in Middleton's history. Funding assistance is being requested to help in the restoration and preservation of the building, its unique features, and particularly the historic wall murals that exist on the second floor.

Significance of Resource

The meeting house has substantial cultural significance having served various community functions throughout its 200-year plus history. The meeting house was built in 1795-96 several years after a wagon road opened up from Rochester to Wolfeboro. The building was originally a one-story church located near the Enoch York farm about ½ mile from its current location. In 1812, the building was moved to its present location by a local resident named Squire Wingate using 12 to 14 oxen. The church was raised up as a two-story building with a banquet hall built underneath on the first floor. It has served as a meeting place for Town functions ever since and as a place of worship on its second floor. It has many unique historical features such as boxed pews on the second floor, typical of the Victorian age, and a continuous wall mural around the second floor walls. The walls were painted in 1811 by a noted New England artist named John Avery. Mr Avery touched up the murals 30 years later in 1841. The wall murals depict a surrounding line of trees with branches and leaves to present the look of an outdoor sanctuary. Over the choir benches, the artist painted a Greek harp in a reddish-brown tone with black lines, four strings and a golden key to each on the top bar. Across the harp is placed on a long slender trumpet of a light-greenish color. Above the harp is the year 1841, the year it was painted.

Imminence of Threat

Various aspects and features of this historic building are in various stages of disrepair and deterioration after more than 200 years of use. Remarkably, much of building is in relatively good shape but some restoration work is still needed to reverse the deterioration process and preserve this historic building for future generations. Residents are concerned that if left alone in its current state the building will deteriorate to a point of no return and could be lost for good. The second floor needs additional structural support. The wall murals are fading and in places the walls are cracking or peeling.

Leverage

The community is willing to use local funds to meet the matching needs to initiate this restoration effort. The Town would also be able to provide additional labor and equipment using the Town resources and volunteer efforts.

Local Support

Middleton residents have easily ranked the preservation of this meeting house as their highest resource protection priority. This building represents a central historical and

cultural feature in the community and continues to be used as a central meeting place for Town functions, especially during the annual Old Home Days. Middleton has claim to one of the longest stretches of Old Home Week celebrations dating back to 1867, some 30 years prior to the official proclamation of Old Home Week by Governor Frank Rollins in 1899.

Partnerships

Middleton's Town Officials are not aware of any partnership opportunities that may be available to assist in the restoration of this building.

Public Access

The downstairs hall continues to be used for the annual town meeting and for many other public and private functions throughout the year. During the annual Old Home Days, religious services are held upstairs, but temporary supports have to be installed downstairs to support the floor beams. The noon-time meal during this celebration and many of the Town dinners are served from this meeting house.

Stewardship

Care and maintenance of the building will continue to be provided by Town employees and volunteers. Recently, the Town public works personnel and volunteers made some drainage improvements and installed a new sump pump drainage system beneath the building to remove water during high ground water conditions.

Method of Preservation

The anticipated method of preservation will be to hire a preservation specialist who can assess the needs and restore the decaying features of the buildings.

Other Significant Local Resource Priorities:

- Remaining undeveloped land around Sunrise Lake.
- Undeveloped Tanglewood properties draining to Sunrise Lake.
- The Bly, a pristine marsh, part of the Jones River watershed.
- Tufts marsh, large part of the Jones River watershed.
- Stevens marsh, a large wetland in the Branch River watershed

Middleton pictures

LOCAL RESOURCE PRIORITY

Town of Milton and
Moose Mountain Regional Greenways

Backland Area on Tenerife Mountain Town of Milton and Moose Mountains Regional Greenways

This resource priority submittal is submitted as collaborative effort between the Town of Milton and Moose Mountain Regional Greenways (MMRG). MMRG is a non-profit charitable trust that was formed by conservation commission members and conservation minded volunteers in a six town region in northern Strafford County that includes the Towns of Brookfield, Farmington, Milton, Middleton, New Durham, and Wakefield. MMRG's primary goal is to identify, protect, and educate others about important natural resource areas in this area and to form a contiguous network of permanently protected conservation lands, generally referred to as greenways to protect these important resources. MMRG intends to facilitate partnerships of landowners, communities and land trusts within the MMRG region to create larger corridors or greenways by connecting islands of existing conservation lands. The land areas that make up these greenways can be either publicly or privately owned. There are many conservation-minded owners who would consider easements if the cost could be defrayed. MMRG feels that the best method of protection is through voluntary land protection, principally conservation easements.

Resource Description:

MMRG members have identified important areas to protect and include in the greenway by using a collection of Natural Resource Inventory maps provided by Strafford Regional Planning Commission. These maps illustrate large, unfragmented habitat areas, water resources, natural heritage inventory, groundwater aquifers and existing protected lands.

Currently, one the important areas identified consisting of the Backland area on Tenerife Mountain in the Town of Milton is for sale. This Backland area contains a high concentration of Natural Heritage species as well as numerous other resources including several important headwater streams, farm and forest land, wildlife habitat, recreational areas, and cultural and scenic areas. This land area also falls directly within the proposed Greenway corridor, and is adjacent to the Nature Conservancy's Tenerife Mountain Sanctuary. This land abuts several farms whose owners are expected to obtain conservation easements when funds are available. Funding assistance is being sought to assist in the acquisition of protective easements on this land area.

Significance of Resource

This Backland area is located in area of Southern NH that is becoming heavily developed which include the City of Rochester area, which is a short drive away. This area contains several headwater streams that contribute to numerous regional waterways including the Jones and Cocheco Rivers. This area provides recreational activities for many outdoor enthusiasts and contains multiple scenic vistas. Many federal and state listed endangered plant and animal species can be found in this area as well as many large, unfragmented blocks of woodlands and wetlands. There are several adjacent farms on prime agricultural land, of significant importance in maintaining a productive, rural landscape in southeastern NH. Lastly, this area potentially connects to Bear Paw and Green Mountain Greenways to the south and north.

Imminence of Threat

This region has been identified by Strafford Regional Planning Commission as facing one of the highest growth rates in the state, driven by development in the adjacent Seacoast Region. Development pressures are compounded by the fact that our towns are on the major Route 16 and Route 11 traffic corridors. Town governments in the member towns do not have the resources to manage this growth and maintain important natural and cultural features in the greenway area.(are not adequate to manage this growth or enforce zoning ordinances while also maintaining the natural and cultural resources in the greenway area.) Like many backland areas in the Moose Mountains region, these mountainous backland areas are still pristine state treasures.

Leverage

The Moose Mountain board of directors contains members of all member-town conservation commissions. The conservation funds of these towns constitute a financial base for matching contributions. Through workshops sponsored with UNH Cooperative Extension, other large landowners in the region have expressed interest in conserving land within the greenways.

Local Support:

Member-town master plans contain commitments to "maintain rural character". Recent votes in the six member-towns reveal broad popular support for this ethic and for conservation measures, including local public funding. Local citizen commitment to conservation was demonstrated this year by a variety of votes in the six member-towns. Each town supported by majority vote Senate Bill 401, the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program. Most towns voted to enhance their conservation fund. Additionally, increased public interest in land conservation easements indicates a likely increase in lands available for use as matching contributions.

Partnerships

The following entities are potential partners:

- NH Fish & Game
- Bear-Paw Regional Greenways
- Green Mountain Conservation Group
- Society for the Protection of NH Forests
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Conservation Fund,
- NH Audubon,
- Strafford Regional Planning Commission
- NH Estuaries Project
- Strafford Rivers Conservancy

Public Access:

Moose Mountains endorses multiple use access of properties on the greenways where appropriate.

Stewardship:

Moose Mountains is not a land trust. Central to the Moose Mountains workplan is the concept that conservation easements will be held by responsible third parties. Easement holders such as land trusts, conservation commissions, and other governmental stewards will be encouraged to meet MMRG stewardship standards.

Method of Preservation

The proposed method of protection would rely on the use of conservation easements. Outright land purchase is also a possible method of preservation.

LOCAL RESOURCE PRIORITY
TOWN OF NEWMARKET

Packers Falls Road Community Recreation Park Newmarket's Local Resource Priority

Resource Description

Newmarket is seeking funding assistance to acquire 6 to 8 acres of land from one of the last remaining large, "in-town" lots to create a community recreation park. This park would provide an additional baseball/softball field, which is very much in need, plus one or two soccer fields, and possibly several tennis courts, a basketball court and a playground area. The location is ideal in many respects because it is in walking distance from several large residential neighborhoods, directly across the street from the Jr./Sr. High School and is about ½ mile from the Elementary School, which can be accessed from sidewalks along South Main Street. The selected piece of land represents the undeveloped half of a large, residentially zoned parcel. The other half of the parcel supports a long-standing florist/nursery business that has several greenhouses onsite. The landowner has expressed some interest in arranging a deal with the Town for unused portion of the parcel, however, the land is also considered to be highly valuable from a development standpoint given its close proximity to the schools and central village area. Many town officials and residents fear that if the Town does not act quickly to acquire at least a portion of this parcel, the entire parcel could be lost to a developer as development pressures continue to grow in this Town.

Significance of Resource

Newmarket is in dire need of additional municipal ball fields to meet the ever-increasing needs of the various recreational youth sports programs. Given the tremendous increases in the number of children participating in the recreational sports programs in the last few years, it has become increasingly difficult to adequately schedule enough field time to support the various age divisions and leagues in the primary sports including baseball, softball and soccer. The Town has only two municipal fields, which were created more than fifteen years ago. **Based on a recent review of the available recreational facilities in several southern NH communities, Newmarket should have at least 2 to 3 more youth-sized, baseball and soccer fields to be comparable to other Towns of similar population size.**

The use of this selected parcel would be highly cost-effective since the Town would be able to incorporate an adjacent parcel of about 5.6 acres that is currently owned by the Town, but is too narrow by itself to be conducive for ball fields. This adjacent parcel was deeded over to the Town more than 12 years ago as part of an open space requirement for a large residential development. Combining the two parcels would create about 10 to 12 acres of useable area, which would be sufficient to create the needed field space. Acquisition of the targeted land area would also prevent the development of a future residential subdivision in this area, which could be imminent, given the rapid growth of the Town and the desirable location of this property. This may be the Town's best opportunity to prevent development of this parcel and create a much needed "in-town" park to serve the recreational needs of the youth and adult residents for many years.

Imminence of Threat

As mentioned above, due to its central location in Town, the development pressures for this particular piece of property will continue to increase as residential growth progresses

in Town. This parcel is located within the municipal water and sewer distribution system, which makes it even more desirable for residential development. It is conceivable that given the current real estate market, the landowner may soon find it more lucrative to sell the land to a developer than to maintain his business operation. The Town would then lose a significant opportunity to preserve a portion of this large "in-town" lot and create a recreation park in an ideal location.

Leverage

Newmarket has \$75,000 in a Community Recreation Trust Fund that can be used for matching purposes in securing funds under the LCHIP Program.. This Trust Fund was established through a warrant article approved in 1999 by a majority of residents who voted and is to be used fund new recreation projects in Town. Moreover, this proposed project is highly cost-effective because of the Town's ability to combine 5.6 acres that it already owns in an adjacent parcel with the targeted 6 to 8 acre parcel to make a larger 12 to 18 acre parcel that would be needed to meet the desired goals. Each parcel by itself would not be sufficient to complete this project.

Local Support

Newmarket residents have shown strong support to increase the youth recreational facilities in Town and especially its ball fields and soccer fields. In 1999, more than 70 percent of the residents who voted on Article #7 voted in favor of establishing the Community Recreation Trust Fund which would be to seek out new recreational facilities.

Partnerships

At this time, Newmarket is not aware of any potential partnerships opportunities that exist and would assist in the acquisition of the selected land area for the intended park purposes.

Public Access

The availability of public access from many sides of this site is what makes this site ideal for the proposed recreation park. The site location will be accessible on foot for many residents with children, which will allow for greater use, reduced parking needs, and less potential vehicle trips and congestion.

Stewardship

The proposed recreation park would be maintained by the Town of Newmarket through a combination of the Newmarket Recreation Department, Public Works Department and the many volunteers who serve in various roles as part of the Newmarket Youth Sports Association.

Method of Preservation

The method of preservation will consist of an outright purchase of land, which would be owned by the Town of Newmarket and dedicated for the future use of a community recreation park.

Packers falls park figure

Neal Mill Road Conservation Land Newmarket's Local Resource Priority

Resource Description

This selected resource consists of acquiring easements on several contiguous parcels that comprise about 260 acres of undeveloped, land area along the Piscassic River and the municipal border of Newmarket and Newfields (See Attached Map). This area is part a much larger wooded area that provides substantial wildlife habitat value and water quality protection for the Piscassic River, which is used as a public water supply. Recently, the development activity has increased in this area, especially in Newfields, which could threaten the integrity of this valuable habitat and water resource. The project would allow the Newmarket to begin a proactive, long-term plan to preserve a riparian corridor along the Piscassic River, its surface water supply, by acquiring conservation easements on contiguous land parcels adjacent to the river.

Significant Properties

Parcel ID	Map/Lot	Acres	Comments
NM-1	R-7/1	48.0	Wooded with Class VI road to Newfields
NM-2	R-7/2	13.0	Smaller lot b/wn two Lots 1 and 4
NM-4	R-7/4	135.0	Mix of fields/woods w/ portion of Piscassic R.
NM-47	R-4/47	30.5	Mix of woods and fields w/frontage to Grant Rd.
NM-51	R-4/51	14.0	Neal Mill Rd. frontage –adj. to Newfields
NM-53	R-4/53	19.0	Contains large section of Piscassic River
Total		259.5	

Significance of Resource

The Neal Mill Road area represents one of the few remaining large, undeveloped tracts of land in Newmarket. This area also contains the mainstem and several tributaries of the Piscassic River as it flows across the border from the neighboring community, Newfields. The Piscassic River is used by Newmarket as a drinking water supply source. A dirt, class VI road connects the two towns in this area, which is remnant of a historic cart path. On the Newfields side, this cart path has become an improved Class IV road known as Halls Mill Road, which in the last few years, has had extensive residential development. It is highly anticipated that developers will try to extend the current development growth into Newmarket along the Neal Mill Road area.

Protecting the Neal Mill Road land area from development has been identified as a long-standing priority according to Newmarket's Master Plan. Protecting this area is particularly important because it would accomplish two significant goals including preserving a large valuable wildlife habitat area and maintain a natural buffer zone along the Piscassic River, which is used a surface water supply source.

Imminence of Threat

Newmarket and Newfields are two of the fastest growing communities in Seacoast Region with respect to residential development. Given this rapid growth in both communities, these undeveloped parcels are subject to increasing development pressures and could be developed in the near future. This land is highly favorable for development given the soil conditions and its close proximity to Newmarket schools and

the central village section of Town. At least one of the landowners has recently been approached by a prospective developer, however, the landowner has expressed an interest in preserving the natural character of the land.

Leverage

The Newmarket Conservation Commission has accrued significant funds of more than \$80,000 by allocating 50 % of the land use change tax for land conservation projects. Newmarket residents recently have also recently approved the establishment of an aquifer protection easement fund. The fund now has over \$130,000 and may also be available for matching purposes, since this land area is within the direct watershed of a principal water supply. Based on current assessment values. It is believed that this project could be done for less than \$200,000.

Local Support

The Neal Mill Road area has been considered one of six high priority natural resource areas in Newmarket since a natural resource inventory was conducted in 1991. Current development patterns and trends in the surrounding have recently raised the importance of protecting this area. **One of the more frequent comments provided by residents in the current Master Plan update process relates to the preservation of the Town's rural character and the protection of its water supply sources.** In addition, at a recent collaborative meeting between the Conservation Commission, Town Council, and the Planning Board, the importance of open space and natural resource protection was discussed has a high priority. This proposed project addresses both concerns, open space and water supply protection.

Partnerships

Although the Nature Conservancy and the Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership have been very active in trying to protect land areas along the shorelines and adjacent to Great Bay, the Neal Mills Road is too far inland for this area to be on their highest priority list. However, the Neal Mill Road area, was identified as an important habitat area by the Great Bay Resource Partnership Program. If Newmarket is successful in acquiring easements on the selected parcels it may prompt Newfields or other conservation organizations in trying to protect other currently undeveloped, connected lands.

Public Access

The selected land areas are adjacent to a larger wooded and undeveloped area that contains a former rail bed from Rockingham Junction to Manchester, which is frequently used by the public for outdoor recreation activities including running, horseback riding, mountain biking, snowmobiling and cross-country skiing. Access to this rail bed and wooded area would continue to be provided through this Neal Mill Road area.

Stewardship

Stewardship would be provided through the Conservation Commission with the use of volunteers and other civic groups such as the Boy Scouts.

Method of Preservation

The preferred method of preservation is through conservation easements rather than outright fee simple acquisitions.

NEAL Mill Rd Figure

LOCAL RESOURCE PRIORITY

Town of Strafford

Evans Mountain Open Space Area

Town of Strafford's Local Resource Priority

Resource Description

This selected resource consists of preserving a large tract of land of about 1015 acres located on Evans Mountain in the Town of Strafford. The land is comprised of two adjacent tax parcels that are owned by the heirs of the family estate of a recently deceased resident. This land is adjacent to several other parcels that are already protected as either Town Forest or part of a nearby Boy Scout Camp. Preserving this selected land tract would nearly double the amount of protected land in this area, creating a large unfragmented, wildlife habitat area.

Significance of Resource

Protecting this large land area of 1015 acres would create one the largest open space preservation areas in the region. This area provides valuable wooded habitat for a variety of wildlife species. It is believed that this land provides prime habitat for bobcat and other large mammals. Preserving this area would be consistent with the goals of the Bearpaw Regional Greenways organization, which has actively seeking out large areas to protect in this area.

Imminence of Threat

Although this area is not likely to be under any immediate threat of development, it is considered somewhat vulnerable in terms of future ownership and long-term use interests. Since the estate heirs who currently own this land apparently live out-of-state, they may be willing to transfer ownership at the first reasonable offer. It is unknown at this time if the current estate owners have any long-term plan or use interests for this land. This may present a good opportunity to acquire easements or an outright purchase at a reasonable amount. Strafford's residents are hoping to protect this land before a developer makes an offer for prospective development interests.

Leverage

The Strafford Conservation Commission has recently established a land conservation fund and has accrued a little more than \$10,000. These funds could be used for matching purposes in funding assistance.

Local Support

Strafford residents have been interested in protecting this land area for a long time. It is has been one of the highest resource protection priorities for many years and is considered to be even more important since the previous long-time landowner and resident has passed away in the last couple of years.

Partnerships

The Bearpaw Regional Greenways organization holds several conservation easements and the Blue Hills Foundation owns a fair amount of land in Strafford. It may be possible to form partnerships with one or both of these organizations to assist in the preservation of this land area. Years ago, the NH Fish and Game Department had also expressed some interest in this land and may still be interested in partnering for this land.

Public Access

This area is widely used by the public for various outdoor recreation activities. There are number of hiking and snowmobile trails that provide access to the summit of Evans Mountain.

Stewardship

There may be number of potential stewardship opportunities given the variety of nonprofit and state agencies associated with this land.

Method of Preservation

The method of preservation may be either an conservation easements or a fee simple interest and will depend on the level of funding assistance and partnership interests.

Evans Mountain figure

LOCAL RESOURCE PRIORITY
TOWN OF WAKEFIELD

Historic Bancroft Barn Restoration/Preservation Town of Wakefield - Local Resource Priority

Resource Description

The Bancroft Barn is one of the oldest and most unique historical buildings in Town. The Barn is a well-known landmark, centrally located in Town off of Route 153. Unlike many of the colonial style barns built in its era, the Bancroft Barn was built with a more European style of the Victorian Age with many distinctive features (See Attached Pictures). The Barn is still owned by the Bancroft family but is considered to be part of the community heritage. The Barn is in need of some restoration work in order to preserve this historical artifact for future generations. Both the Wakefield Conservation and Heritage Commissions are seeking funding assistance to help in the restoration and preservation of this building. The owner is willing to participate in the process and will also financially contribute to the restoration efforts.

Significance of Resource

As mentioned above, this Barn has been a long time landmark for the Town of Wakefield and is considered to be a very significant piece of the community heritage. The building's unique design and features are very rare for this region, which has made it quite an attraction for history buffs.

Imminence of Threat

Many town residents fear that if not restored, the building would soon be lost in the foreseeable future. The current owner is not likely to be able to fund the needed restoration work by himself.

Leverage

Both the Town of Wakefield, through its Heritage Commission, and the current owner are willing to provide funds to meet the matching requirements.

Local Support

The restoration and preservation of this building is highly supported by the Town residents and is listed as one of the highest historical resource priorities in the recent Master Plan update. The Town of Wakefield has recently formed a Heritage Commission to help prioritize and advocate the preservation of historical and cultural resources.

Partnerships

Currently, the Heritage Commission has not identified any other potential partnership opportunities to assist in the preservation of this building, other than the current owner.

Public Access

Other than by outside viewing, there is no public access available to this building. If the restoration work could be completed with funding assistance, providing for public access into the interior of the building may be considered through scheduled showings as part of an arrangement with the Heritage Commission.

Stewardship

Stewardship of the restored building would most likely involve some mutual arrangement between the current owner and the Town's Heritage Commission.

Method of Preservation

The primary method of preservation, following the completion of the necessary restoration work, would involve a mutual arrangement between the current owner and the Heritage Commission to preserve this building for future generations.

Bancroft Barn - Pictures
Town of Wakefield – Local Resource Priority

**Side
View**

**Rear
View**

Spinney Meeting House

Town of Wakefield – Local Resource Priority

Resource Description

The Spinney Meeting House is one of the earliest places of worship established in the Town of Wakefield. This building was erected by the Spinney Family in the late 18th century during the early settlement period (See Attached Picture). The building is located off of Route 109 and the first historic building that can be seen while entering Wakefield from the east. The meeting house is not currently used but represents a significant part of the community heritage. The Heritage Commission has recently purchased this building but is seeking additional funds to conduct some restoration work to preserve this building.

Significance of Resource

The Spinney meeting house is one of the earliest known places of worship used by the early settlers in the region. Many Town residents would like to preserve this piece of history and community heritage. Two of the Spinney family homesteads are still standing. With the proposed restoration, this building may be usable for many Town meeting and gatherings.

Imminence of Threat

This building has been in private ownership and has not been seriously maintained for a long time but is still in relatively good shape structurally. However, if restoration efforts are not initiated in the next few years, it is quite likely that any further deterioration of this building may result in irreversible damage and total loss of the building. The Wakefield Heritage Commission has recently purchased the building as an initial first step to preserving this building. However, additional funding is necessary to carry out the needed restoration work.

Leverage

The Town of Wakefield would be willing to share in the restoration costs in fulfillment of the matching requirements. The Town could also assist in providing labor using Town personnel or volunteer time from its residents.

Local Support

The Town of Wakefield has a long history of preserving its cultural heritage and historic buildings, but has recently increased its commitment to this goal by establishing a Historic District and Heritage Commission. In the Master Plan, preservation of the many historic buildings is identified as one of the primary community goals. Many residents have expressed an interest in helping out in this restoration effort.

Partnerships

There have been other potential partnership opportunities identified to date to help preserve this building.

Public Access

Currently, the building is not used or accessed by the public, but following the proposed restoration efforts, it could serve as an effective meeting place for various Town or group gatherings.

Stewardship

With the recent purchase of this building, future stewardship of this building will be under the jurisdiction of the Town's Heritage Commission.

Spinney Meeting House – Pictures
Town of Wakefield – Local Resource Priority

Front View of the Spinney Meeting House